

2-12 Cav. 'Stalkers' Cordon Abu Ghraib

By Spc. Bryan Kinkade
1st Cavalry Division PAO

CAMP BLACK JACK-
The stench of rotting animal carcasses and decaying garbage filled the air as truckloads of "Thunder Horse" Soldiers rolled into the dark, desolate district of Abu Ghraib. Insurgents with mortars, AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenades ambushed these Soldiers nearly a week ago.

Now they were back.

Before the sun rose, the "Stalkers" of Scout Platoon, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, were out the gate and on the road to Abu Ghraib. They drove with headlights off and only night vision goggles illuminating the dark and dusty roads. The convoy hit the highway and cruised up to their destination, uneventfully.

"I break down the missions into small steps," Staff Sgt. Jerry Helton, the Stalker's platoon sergeant said. "One



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A convoy links back up after cordon and search of parts of Abu Ghraib on the service road off of Abu Ghraib Highway. Next, the 2-12 Cavalry Soldiers drove to White Gold Village for another cordon and search mission.

step is getting out of the gate and getting to our mission safely."

Their mission was to provide outer cordon security in Abu Ghraib and White Gold

Village while elements of 1-5 Cav. searched the buildings for weapons, ammunition and insurgents. Although they found very little, to these Soldiers, their mission was

still successful.

"I could care less if we search for 20 hours and don't even find an [AK-47] round, as long as we come back

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1BCT Commander Stresses Cooperation, Resolve

From 1st Brigade Combat Team
Unit Public Affairs
Representatives

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A crater, still smoking, left the overpass bridge unusable and disrupted the normal evening business traffic for the local citizens as they returned from the Arbiem holiday.

Insurgents have been placing Improvised Explosive

Devices (IEDs) hoping to terrorize the neighborhoods in the Al Thawra district and injure or kill coalition forces. An unfortunate side effect though, is that it weakens the Iraq infrastructure according to Col. Robert "Abe" Abrams, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

"In an attempt to hurt the coalition, the insurgents end

up hurting Iraq by destroying [their] own resources and depriving the Iraqi people of [those resources]," Abrams said. "It is a shame when they resort to attacks that hurt their own people and cripple the roads of Iraq."

Anti-coalition forces also use the local people as human shields, the commander noted, seeking refuge in places that the coalition will not attack,

such as hospitals.

"They endanger [the Iraqi] sick and wounded for their own gain," Abrams said.

Abrams added that his forces would not be deterred from turning over a free and sovereign Iraq to its people. He noted that when Iraqi citizens respond by helping the coalition, it is a major step toward their independence.

'Stalkers' Secure Area Amidst Flies, Stench

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[safe]," Helton said.

The first job the scouts had when they arrived in the dangerous neighborhood was to cordon off the area with concertina wire. This prevents movement within the search area, and enables checks for possible Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) or hostile forces.

Next, they pulled security.

These Soldiers have seen plenty of action around Abu Ghraib and were not hesitant to take action if something came down. Pfc. Merrick Barnes, the scout platoon's medic, remembers when all was quiet and the next thing he knew, everything seemed to be blowing up.

"You'd just be sitting here [one minute], quiet as dead, and then BOOM," he said.

After the search teams finished their job, the Stalkers were ready to jump into their vehicles and get underway to their next objective: White Gold Village.

As they pulled into the village, the pungent odor of animal manure was so strong they could almost taste it. Thousands of flies swarmed the air, feeding off a giant pile of feces nearby.

"We call it [manure] road," Spc. K.C. Kolesnick, one of the Stalker's scouts, said on the way to the village.

In this farm village, the Stalkers didn't expect much contact, if any at all.



Infantry Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, dismount a Bradley Fighting Vehicle during their cordon and search mission in White Gold Village. The Soldiers were looking for weapons, ammunition and insurgents.

"This town is usually quiet," Kolesnick said. "We don't usually have problems with them. We'd be lucky to

find anything here."

The Stalkers sat patiently in the smelly town. They kept alert and looked for anyone who would try to escape the search. After two hours, the search teams were once again ready to go.

"It's better being bored than getting shot at," Kolesnick said.

It had been more than 11 hours since they left Camp Black Jack. On the ride back, the Stalkers changed their focus from looking for insurgents to watching for IEDs. Once they arrived safely in the gate, the exhausted Soldiers let out a sigh of relief, but were a little upset they didn't find much.

"It was quiet [all day]," Kolesnick said disappointedly. "The only thing we found was an unexploded ordnance."



Photos by Spc. Bryan Kinkade, 1CD PAO

Spec. Adrian Barajas, 20, monitors the radio while manning his Mark-19 automatic grenade launcher on top of his humvee. Barajas was part of the cordon of Abu Ghraib and White Gold Village.

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Stetson Factory to Close in St. Joseph, Mo.

► From *St. Joseph News-Press*

ST. JOSEPH, Mo.- President Reagan wore one when he occupied the White House. Two decades later, President George W. Bush donned a Stetson hat at his ranch in Crawford, Texas.

Local officials were known to give a Stetson to the governor or other visiting dignitaries. Country music legends Garth Brooks and Waylon Jennings quietly perused the merchandise at the Stetson outlet store in St. Joseph.

"There isn't anyone who can think of a cowboy hat without thinking of a Stetson," said Kari Followwell, manager of the Stetson outlet store in St. Joseph. "It's known throughout the world. Garth Brooks came here before he was really famous."

Since 1971, the wide-brimmed, western-style hats have been a symbol of St. Joseph and this city's link to celebrities and influential figures.

That all ends in June, when the Stetson hat factory closes its doors in St. Joseph, eliminating 110 jobs.

Followwell said there is a possibility the company's retail outlet, located next to the factory on Leonard Road, could remain open.

Followwell said the store gets visitors from as far as Germany, Italy and Spain.

Many watch a video on how a Stetson is made and then choose from the rows of felt hats made in St. Joseph.

"I like to get it right from the source," said Vincent Fleming of Alton, Ill., who was shopping at the outlet

store Wednesday afternoon. "I probably spend a couple hundred dollars a year in this store."

Another customer in the store, Jack Ernest of Green Valley, Ariz., made sure his trip from Ohio to Arizona included a stop in St. Joseph just so he could purchase a Stetson hat.

"We're sorry to see it closing," he said while leaving the outlet store Wednesday.

Patt Lilly, president of the St. Joseph Area Chamber of Commerce, said it's difficult to measure how the loss of Stetson will affect the city's

image.

"There is a psychological impact to the community," he said. "It's just a sad loss. It was a tourist attraction. People would go to Stetson to buy a hat at the company store."

Kelly Smith, manager of the St. Joe Boot Co., said she'll miss hav-

ing Stetson in St. Joseph. She said the two stores often exchanged customers who were interested in western clothing.

"They definitely send people here," she said. "There's a trickle-down effect when one business closes."

Followwell, whose mother worked in the Stetson factory,



St. Joseph News-Press

Kari Followwell, manager of the Stetson Outlet Store in St. Joseph, Mo., assists customers.

said company officials have made no final announcement on the fate of the retail store.

She thinks the St. Joseph store would thrive even if the city can no longer boast being the source of hats worn by presidents, singers and regular folks who just want to look like a cowboy.

"On some Saturdays, the store is so crowded, you can't move," Followwell said.

(Editor's note: Hatco Inc. of Garland, Texas, announced Wednesday, April 14, that the Stetson Hat Factory in St. Joseph, Mo. will close by the end of June. It wasn't clear whether production will be moved to Hatco's other facility near Dallas, Texas.)

Tuesday

High: 84
Low: 64



Wednesday

High: 89
Low: 63



Thursday

High: 91
Low: 67



Reminder: Mother's Day is Sunday, May 9

There's still time to mail a card or send flowers.

Today in Cav History

1968 - The 1/7, 2/7, and 3/7 Cavalry. "Gary Owen" found an overturned enemy truck with over 200 loaded weapons in the A Shau Valley. This was the first of many enemy caches they found during Operation Delaware.

2003 - President George W. Bush visited Fort Hood and the 1st Cavalry Division. Attending Church services with 1-227th Regiment's POWs.



Inaugural Turkey Hunt for Pennsylvania Youth

► From *Times-Leader* (Wilkes-Barre, Pa.)

Expect another "opening day" one week after yesterday's trout season opener.

On Saturday, the spring gobbler season will begin - for a select group of about 105,000 hunters.

During the one-day inaugural event on April 24, hunters age 12-15 with a junior hunting license will be able to hunt wild turkeys.

Call it Pennsylvania's first youth spring gobbler hunt.

"The idea came up several years ago," said Tim Conway, information and education supervisor for the state Game Commission's Northeast Region Office in Dallas. "We had a squirrel hunt and a pheasant hunt, and we try to do whatever we possibly can for youth hunters."

"The youth turkey hunt was the next logical step."

This special one-day season for junior hunters will be held one week before the May

1 statewide opening day of the spring gobbler season. The season runs May 1-29.

Last year there were 105,099 junior hunting licenses sold in the state, 598 more than the 104,501 sold in 1995.

"Calling a gobbler into gun range is one of the most exciting aspects of hunting. We are pleased to be able to offer young hunters this special opportunity," Conway said.

Pennsylvania is not alone in holding a special gobbler hunt for junior license holders. Neighboring New York - where Sunday turkey hunting is permitted and two spring gobblers may be taken - will hold its inaugural Youth Turkey Day the weekend of April 24-25.

Don't expect Pennsylvania's young hunters to be out there alone. Regulations require them to have a junior hunting license and to be accompanied by an adult who cannot carry arms.

Supervising adults can do little more than help scout and

call in birds - as well as provide important guidance and instruction.

All other hunting regulations are the same as for the general spring gobbler season, including the 100-square-inch fluorescent orange requirements and hunting hours of one-half hour before sunrise until noon.

And, only one bearded turkey may be taken during the spring season.

"The Game Commission believes this new season can be very instrumental in drawing young people to this challenging and rewarding opportunity," said Lori Richardson, the state Game Commission's public outreach coordinator, in a prepared statement.

"We also believe the new season promotes increased 'together time' for parents and children and will inspire many veteran turkey hunters to take a young person afield to experience the rewards of this exciting activity."

Today in History

April 20

► From historychannel.com

1841 First detective story, Edgar Allen Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, is published

1861 Col. Robert E. Lee resigns from the U.S. Army
1902 Marie and Pierre Curie isolate radium

1926 Vitaphone, a process to add sound to film, is announced

1970 Nixon announces more troop withdrawals

1971 "Fragging" on the rise in U.S. units in Vietnam

1978 Korean Air Lines jet forced down over Soviet Union

1999 Massacre at Columbine High School

Scores



MLB:

American League

Boston 5
New York 4

National League

Chicago 8
Cincinnati 1

Boston Marathon Results

Men's Winner: Timothy Cherigat (Kenya) 2:10:37
Top American: Christopher Zieman (Santa Cruz, Calif.) 2:25:45 (13th)
Wheelchair: Ernst Van Dyk (South Africa) 1:18:27
Women's Winner: Catherine Ndereba (Kenya) 2:24:27
Top American: Julie Spencer (Baraboo, Wisc.) 2:56:39 (16th)
Wheelchair: Cheri Blauwet (Menlo Park, Calif.) 1:39:53

TV GUIDE

	ATLANTIC	PACIFIC	Sports	Spectrum
18:00	Lizzie McGuire/ The Amanda Show	Tonight Show with Jay Leno	Motorcycle Racing	Star Trek: The Motion Picture 16:00/ Ebert & Roeper
19:00	Jeopardy/ Headline News	The Late Show with David Letterman	Sportscenter	The Wild Thornberrys/ The Fairly Oddparents
20:00	ESPNNews/ Headline News	National Lampoon's Vacation	NHL Playoffs - 1st Round Gm 7: Vancouver @ Calgary	The Simpsons/ The Cosby Show
21:00	7th Heaven	National Lampoon's European Vacation 21:45		Monk
22:00	Master & Commander: The Far Side of the World		ESPNNews 22:30	The Practice